

# Mindfulness

**Mindfulness is non-evaluative awareness.** Jon Kabat-Zinn, defines it as: "Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally."

The difference between dealing with our experience for problem solving mindfully and dealing with it non-mindfully can be likened to the difference between listening non-judgementally and listening judgementally to your own child who is panicking and needing your love and support. The judgemental parent who is primarily considering the demand on themselves as a parent and the outcome of an intervention for their child is not primarily there "with the child" although they might be there "for the child". This parent is primarily considering what needs to be done to fix the child without necessarily connecting empathically to the child. Alternatively, the non-judgemental parent, who is primarily concerned with "being with" the child conveys to the child the sense that they are not going to be judged and that the support is unconditional. The child gets the impression dad or mum is listening unconditionally. The child and the parent then bond around the child feeling heard. Most importantly, the child gets the sense that they have power to influence the outcome with the parent.

Consider, then, that the child, in this example, is like your personal interior world that needs to be listened to non-judgementally. Let's call our interior world, our involuntary reaction to any opportunity/risk situation. In this light, let's call the mode of "being with" our interior world: non-judgemental, feminine, mindful and receptive. Furthermore, let's call the mode of "being for" our interior world: judgemental, masculine, non-mindfulness and tough minded.

Kabat-Zinn's defines mindfulness in verbal terms. He defines it as a method or practice presently happening, in the moment. Mindfulness is about observing, *paying attention, in a particular way: on purpose, in the moment, and non-judgementally*. Mindfulness is an activity from a perspective, way or mode of being of "paying attention, in a particular way: on purpose, in the moment, and non-judgementally". This perspective picks up on a particular content. The content is what is observed. A person is observing

something about themselves i.e. their present experience. How they are observing is determining what they are seeing (about themselves).

For example, in the practice of mindfulness I can be observing, non-judgementally and in the moment, that while I am considering a course of action to solve a problem that I am feeling tense physically. I am paying attention in the present moment on purpose and non-judgementally to the physical sensation of tension. In that moment I am aware of the association between the option and my body's reaction to the option. In the act of mindfulness I am observing the content of my experience, the sensation of tension. The content is what I am experiencing; my body felt sense of tension. Whilst the awareness of the content is determined by the mode of observing, the content is not the same thing as the act.

Furthermore, in the act of mindfulness, for example, I might also be observing, non-judgementally, in the moment, what I am imagining, while, I am considering a course of action. I might also be aware of associations in my mind that are triggered when I consider a course of action. For example, while considering a course of action, associations or symbols in my mind of someone I admire, a role model, might be triggered. Or, while considering a course of action, it might trigger associations or symbols in my mind of someone I detest or don't value. The awareness of these associated images is what I am observing and this content is the result of a mindful mode of observing myself in the moment of considering options.

Conversely, if I am actively evaluating and judging the relevance or usefulness of a course of action then I am not in a state of mindfulness. In this mode of being I am actively constructing. I am not passively observing. I am actively constructing a perspective to act on. In this mode I actively and selectively gather and evaluate what is deemed to be "evidence" to justify a position to act out directly and deliberately. I am personally invested in and attached to this constructed perspective because I believe it will work evidenced by the fact that I act out my judgement. This mode of being is based on the act of rationalizing, and valuing of rationalizing or judgement, as a method for problem solving and being.

This method takes positions and uses them as fixed points from which to act. Ultimately, these fixed positions develop prejudice about what will work and what is

possible. They embed us in prejudice as a way of being. This method has me acting out a fixed and prejudicial position emanating from a constructed perspective. In the act of mindfulness I am observing how I feel while I am considering a position more simply. In the act of mindfulness I never deliberately take positions and am never compelled to deliberately act out of those positions. In this sense mindfulness promotes presence of mind and being in the now, free of constructions and prejudice. Mindfulness promotes and validates a sense of self in the here and now, which then underpins the possibility of adopting open mindedness.

Conversely, the practice of actively judging the usefulness and relevance of an awareness for action is a waste of our private healing time. Instead of renewing us in mind and body, and assisting us to approach the world in trust and openness, it cultivates prejudice; fixed positions which drain our minds and bodies of energy or hype us up to self-sabotage. Prejudice makes us more prone to be reactive when we encounter the world after a private period of considering and dwelling on a matter.

**The method of acting or seeing, be it observing mindfully or rationalizing (and constructing a perspective to hold a position on something) to justifying an action, changes what we observe.** In a real sense it changes our experience. How I view something changes what we see. How I engage with a problem changes the way I deal with a problem and the probabilities of a successful outcome, because the experiential realities (the content) generated by the different modes of engagement are qualitatively different.

Mindfulness generates valid and reliable content. Judgement generates prejudice, invalid and unreliable content. For example if I am aware that considering an option leaves me feeling tense. Tension is raw data. There is no interpretation about its value. The awareness that I am tense is almost sufficient for adjustment. Awareness is treated as having its own value, rather than being evaluated regarding its relevance or usefulness for action. As such it promotes adjustment. It does not need to be seen to be useful or relevant to be useful or relevant.

But if I say I need to take certain action because I believe *my experience* in the past of a certain type of people *means* I should not associate with them, then how do I know the relevance of that construct or prejudice for this situation I am dealing with now. I

assume I know the meaning of the experience for my present situation. I am treating the constructed meaning as a guiding fact. The fact is I don't know the relevance of a past experience for a new encounter. Prejudiced action is rationalized behaviour and as rationalized behaviour it is standing on an assumption which is a construction and not a fact.

On the other hand, my observation that I am tense (as in the previous examples) or that I am imagining something is a fact and a more reliable reference point. I am subjectively experiencing something and I am aware of that fact. The problem is most people feel subjectivity is erroneous. However, we are not drawing conclusions about the meaning of a subjective experience. We are just acknowledging the experience in its most deconstructed and factual sense. The fact is I am feeling tense or calm and I am in fact perceiving tension or calmness. Subjective or not it is a fact, whereas, constructed answers to problems are based on constructed assumptions which may or may not be true or relevant and they are not facts. Yet they are treated as facts in the constructivist approach to problematic problem solving.

**Mindfulness is a feminine activity.** Whilst it is purposeful (and assertive in that sense) it mostly requires a level of passively observing and submitting in the moment to our present continuous experience or presently happening experience. A masculine approach to observing is detached and judgemental in its affective tone and usually manifests itself as trying to master experience, engineer it or channel it. The aim of a masculine-non-mindfulness approach is often to judge the "evidence" according to its usefulness or relevance to solve a problem for action. The masculine approach is to actively construct links to relevance rather than passively observe and acknowledge.

There is a fundamental flaw in the non-mindfulness approach. It assumes judgements can be objective. It assumes that we can make judgements, about the relevance and usefulness of our experience, especially in a state of personal crisis, which are objective and not subjective. This is a completely false assumption as our experience is always subjective. In a crisis our experience is often laced with irrational thoughts and exaggerated emotion.

The result of using this masculine constructivist approach, which is based on a false assumption, is that it cultivates prejudice about what will work and what will not work.

This generates anxiety, depression, mania, paranoia and self-sabotaging behaviour. If we invest our private therapeutic processing time in this type of masculine, judgemental, answer-seeking behaviour we are effectively spending all that private time developing reactivity not adjustment. So when we go back out into the risk opportunity situation we are inclined to react rather than listen. Instinctively we know this is what is happening and that is why we get anxious. We instinctively sense we are in a destructive mode because we are in a mindset which will not adapt to changing and unforeseen contingencies. Furthermore, some people live in a constant state of anxiety, depression and self-sabotaging because they deal with all personal crises in this mode. They have trait anxiety, depression and personality disorders.

My thesis is that mindfulness is a component of adjustment and facilitates adjustment because the content or information is more reliable and valid. Alternatively constructed information is less reliable and less valid. In the non-mindful approach, evaluating and judging the relevance or usefulness of what I am considering as an option regarding a problem is maladaptive, when dealing with problematic issues because the content or information is unreliable and invalid. A non-mindful and more masculine judging approach to problem solving lead to rationalized behaviour rather than creative spontaneous behaviour. Rationalized behaviour causes anxiety, depression and self-sabotaging behaviour, when we are dealing with problematic personal issues. Therefore, how I observe changes what I observe and how I observe changes the possibilities for adjustment and self-sabotage.

**The Sixteen Factor Personality Test, by Raymond Cattell,** is a respected and widely accepted scientific psychometric test for enduring traits. According to this test there are five Global Scales, traits or factors and sixteen Subscales, factors or traits.

### **The Global Scales are**

#### **Extroversion/Introversion;**

#### **Anxiety;**

#### **Receptivity/Tough Mindedness;**

#### **Accommodation/Independence, and**

## **Self-Control/Lack of Self Control**

Each Global Scale is composed of a particular group of subscales.

It is my view that Receptivity, which is one of the Global Traits, is critical to mindfulness. Receptivity is a positive, feminine Archetype or trait. The Archetype is the Priestess. The Priestess Archetype is a symbol of the capacity to sense reality through one's body felt sense and imagination. The opposite of Receptivity is Tough Mindedness. The Archetype for Tough Mindedness is the Drill Sergeant. The Drill Sergeant is not aware of his or her body felt sense when they are in role. They are masculine. This is a negative masculine trait for the purposes of psychotherapy and healing.

The issue for healing and psychotherapy is **the level of presence and balance of the positive (and negative) Archetypes** for mental health and adjustment. There is a time for the Priestess part of me to be activated and there is a time for the Drill Sergeant part of me to be activated in problem solving. At the psychotherapeutic level I need to activate the Priestess. When I engage the world outside psychotherapy I may need to be more toughminded, like a Drill Sergeant.

In most romantic partnerships, in general, there is a balance between the level and presence of all positive and negative, masculine and feminine Archetypes or Traits. One will be more Tough Minded than the other and the other will be more Receptive than the other. This is not gender specific. **In a crisis our familiar and particular balance between our masculine and feminine, positive and negative archetypes goes into flux. We experience this as being out of our comfort zone.**

Another way of looking at the notion of our comfort zone is in terms of safe proximity to intimacy in relationships. The Hollywood version of attachment is represented by the notion that **the closer we get to someone the better.** However style and quality of attachments formed in early childhood often determine what is comfortable in the risk/opportunity context of intimacy later in life. It often determines how we negotiate our dependency needs later in life. If that comfort zone or familiar proximity is violated then anxiety spikes. The comfortable proximity which develops in childhood is not necessary close proximity to the significant other, usually mum and/or dad.

Furthermore, dysfunctional modes of relating are not necessarily unsafe and uncomfortable. For example, a person who has never been hugged by a parent or experienced much affection and praise may be intimidated by physical affection, praise and intimacy as an adult in a romantic relationship. They may prefer to be with someone who does not hug them.

In a romantic long term relationship a safe proximity is accepted between the lovers around how much physical intimacy and praise is acceptable. In this mode the relationship is functional for both at an acceptable level, and in this mode the relationship can survive the test of time, even though a couple may not experience much physical intimacy or positive feedback. The partners are comfortable with each other and this works for them.

In a relationship there is a specific and peculiar balance between positive and negative Archetypes or Traits. This forms a comfort zone for both partners during the marriage and is the dynamic which sets up the initial and ongoing attraction to each other. In a crisis when the balance gets out of whack and the comfort zone is eroded, the stability of the relationship is automatically in doubt.

**How does this apply to Mindfulness?** Mindfulness requires the feminine trait of Receptivity, the Archetype of the Priestess. People with strong presence of the Tough Minded trait are not mindful generally speaking and they find the therapeutic process of Mindfulness very difficult. Furthermore a person's comfort zone and their aversions are also determined by their traits and type. Mindfulness as a therapeutic technique directly cultivates an experientially based understanding of an individual's comfort zone and aversions.

**In a crisis opposites are in conflict seeking resolution or synthesis, dialectically.**

This lack of balance is what consumes our minds and swamps our presence of mind. The opposites are the feminine and the masculine, positive and negative traits. When the accepted and familiar balance between these traits is lost we are out of our comfort zone, individually and as a couple.

In romantic relationships more often than not issues like: attraction and bonding, longevity of the relationship and break down of a relationship; manifest themselves

around the issue of the balance in the complementary traits and proximity. When the balance and proximity are disturbed there is a crisis and the comfort zone vanishes. Mindfulness can be helpful in a crisis because it deals with our sense of losing our comfort zone experientially.

**What sits below our consuming mental state(s) is our unconscious sense of reality, personal truth and safety.** Our involuntary body felt sense and imagination are mirroring these unconscious **synthesizing realities**. However, the mirror image is opaque or symbolic, if you will. It is not clear what the body felt sense or symbol means for action. This is the reality of the mirroring. So we need to respect this by suspending judgement about the relevance of our mindfulness for action.

The often perceived problem with my approach is it is assumed this validating and non-judgemental approach to our humanity can be used to justify any behaviour or any intervention. In others word, it is assumed I am saying we can just do what we like without having to scrutinize and examine motive and evidence. I am absolutely not saying this. *In fact in mindfulness practice we attempt to keep the two worlds, the therapeutic and the world of engagement risk and opportunity very separate.* Mindfulness demands that I never use the knowledge I gain from my mindful experience of self to directly and deliberately justify actions and interventions. Anxiety and neurosis come from rationalized behaviour i.e. using self- awareness directly and deliberately to justify a behaviour.

Often in therapy, an anxious client is not able to benefit from support because they are constantly worrying about how is this experience in therapy useful or relevant to addressing immediate questions and risks. If the therapist's support does not seem immediately relevant then they are not engaged and they don't bond with the process and the therapist.

**When we have disturbingly negative or overwhelmingly positive experiences, they can rob us of our presence of mind or comfort zone.** We can become preoccupied with thoughts and feelings about the event, how it is impacting us and how to resolve it. Such experiences can be triggered by events like: a life threatening incident; job loss; a car accident or work place injury. Overwhelmingly positive

experiences, like falling in love, can also consume our minds. The events are moments of high risk and opportunity.

We can become so consumed by illumination in a crisis and as we ascend to the top of the mountain of illumination we get to a tipping point where we decide to run with and act out the illumination. At this tipping point the illumination is so consuming and seductive that we become convinced of its efficacy to solve a problem. Once we make the judgement the illumination is relevant, once we are convinced by the relevance of the illumination, to solve the problem at hand, we are necessarily compelled to act out the illumination. At this point we are not acting freely. We are a stone rolling down a mountain in full state of compulsivity and self-sabotage. Ironically, at this point we have no real sense of relevance, appropriateness, safety, risk, opportunity, timing or sense of reality. At the tipping point we make a judgement that the illumination is relevant and useful for resolving the current issue effectively simply by the force of the experience of illumination. That is to say, effectively we act out the illumination not because it is relevant but because it has consumed us.

If, at this point, I simply acknowledge my body felt sense, I circuit break from the compulsive force of the illumination and then, at this point, I create space for my unconscious sense of relevance to inform action in the risk/opportunity moment. As a corollary to this, the main reason people see psychologists for psychotherapy is for the psychologist to act as a circuit breaker from their self-sabotaging instincts and habitual compulsions. The primary domain of psychology is the promotion of psychological safety not the enhancement of the quest for meaning.

What generally happens, for most people, is we ask ourselves the question: **What am I going to do about this crisis situation to resolve it?** Clients take this question to their psychologist. This question rises to consciousness immediately, and its salience is directly proportionate to the gravity of the issue at hand. Its level of salience is related to the level of risk and opportunity, consciously perceived or not consciously perceived.

**As a general principle of psychology, unresolved issues involuntarily push to the surface until they are resolved.** How we manage the push to the surface is the key to developing a creative resolution. In mindfulness we validate the push to the

surface, recognizing it as an energetic flow needing expression and acknowledgement. Sometimes in a crisis the energetic flow of questions and options for resolution is so overwhelming we lose our sense of appropriateness. Mindfulness is a way of managing this energetic flow for a creative outcome.

Generally speaking, the answer or resolution to the question: *What am I going to do about it*, is not known in advance of an evolving outcome. However, we naturally go looking for "the answer" as we energetically seek comforting certainty over discomfoting uncertainty, and security over insecurity. **We prefer to stay in our comfort zone.** The energetic quest for comfort can undermine the resolution of the conflict within us and outside us if not managed properly. It can undermine us because we are inclined to rush to judgement, and adopted fixed positions, about what might work and what might fast track us back to our comfort zone. In this sense the rush to judgement is a rush to get back to our comfort zone as soon as possible. However, a protocol dedicated to developing a fixed position to answer the question, ultimately makes us reactive, because we are spending all our private therapeutic time developing prejudice rather than openness.

**The purpose of mindfulness is to keep the question alive**, in an attitude of open mindedness, till the question stops arising into consciousness. Till the question becomes redundant. The question stops rising into consciousness when we have resolved the issue. However, **the quest to maintain our comfort zone often exists in opposition to the need to stay open minded and mindful.** The enemy of the question is "the answer". Our natural tendency is to try of kill the question with an answer yet this is the thing we need to be most cautious about.

Often people feel that a way out of a crisis is to discover what they want, then act out that desire. Their attempt to secure freedom from the crisis in this method, effectively is determined by desire. The method is the desire to stay comfortable, avoid pain and seek pleasure. Predictably desire to stay comfortable then determines the options generated.

In general terms, we come to awareness of what we want and what we don't want. But our personal reality is more than wanting and not wanting. Mindfulness is about acknowledging wanting and aversions as we experience them, in the present moment,

but not drawing any conclusions about relevance for action from those experiences. Mindfulness assumes we have a sense of reality which embodies our truth which sits below wanting and not wanting.

**In highly problematic, risky situations one can assume our history, and prejudice about what is possible, will repeat itself using this method of just seeking what I want.** If there have been tragic situations of abuse, for example, this method will probably repeat the historical, prejudiced, defensive reaction to that historical abuse in the present. Such is the deception of desire as the key method in problematic risky situations.

We have both the capacity for transcendence and being conditioned. We are conditioned by positive and negative reinforcement yet we seek freedom and dignity regardless of conditioning. Ultimately we all seek freedom and independence but we need to negotiate that with others.

For example, often people are energetically attracted to partners in life that mirror the pattern of abuse from a parent and their family of origin. They desire the type of romantic relationship in the present which repeats the pattern of abuse from the parent and the family of origin.

Why would someone do this? One explanation is that the unresolved issues concerning how a parent treated a child keeps surfacing again and again because it is still not resolved in the rejected child/adult. In other words we act out the unresolved conflict through a romantic relationship as the way to resolve it. We act out the unresolved issue externally and expressively, rather than mindfully and internally.

For example a child who is rejected by a parent may still be in denial of the rejection later in life. When the child becomes an adult, they may still be energetically fostering the same prejudice or denial from many childhood. The denial or prejudice about rejection back then gets projected onto how they decide to invest in a new romantic relationships in adult life now. The projection is the energetic acting out of the unresolved issue from childhood in the form of a prejudice. Put simple the person suffering denial of rejection is attracted to a person who will reject them.

Therefore in childhood the abused child is asking itself the question: what am I going to do about this abuse? Their answer is defensive and rationalized. For example, an abuse child might say I am never going to let this happen to my kids or loved ones. Then when that child grows up and meets a romantic partner who has also been abused the child (now an adult) goes out to rescue partner, out of sense of over identification and compassion for the suffering of the other, setting themselves up to be taken advantage of. Being taken advantage of is the very unresolved experience they are still dealing with today as back then in childhood. Instead of trying to form an adult relationship based on freedom and responsibility with their romantic partner they are energetically attached to and attracted to a relationship based on rescuing and fixing. The mode of behaviour is rationalized by them saying to themselves: they are not going to let it happen to the people they love. So they walk into harm's way, blind to their body felt sense of risk. Instead they take on a highly rationalized approach thinking they have to be all-powerful and all-knowing for others to protect the other from the harm that happened to them as a child. This rationalized behaviour denies their vulnerabilities and needs to be safe and cared for too.

In this state of projection the adult is energetically aroused and attracted to a mode of relationship replicating the same pattern as the pattern of relationship formerly experienced with a parent or family of origin. The adult is energetically attached to and psychologically invested in repeating the pattern. The unresolved issue sits under the maladaptive habit of denial or prejudice. The unresolved issue keeps pushing up into consciousness as its means of seeking a proper resolution. The unresolved issue does not go away till it is resolved properly.

Open mindedness creates like a space for our unconscious sense of safety, truth and reality to inform action in an evolving synthesizing outcome rather than conditioning informing action in the present. Wanting and desiring can crowd out that space. Our quest for comfort and pain avoidance in the midst of extremes of pain or pleasure competes for space in our minds with the need to maintain open mindedness.

**Open mindedness is the essential ingredient in synthesizing a response to the question: What am I going to do about it?** Open mindedness is not natural when one feels at risk. Mindfulness is an artificial technique which can promote synthesizing open mindedness. However using mindfulness requires an act of faith in ourselves

and its efficacy. It does not come easily and naturally especially when we are feeling at risk and overwhelmed by a sense of opportunity. It is not what we desire.

Mindfulness keeps the question alive by promoting a practise of non-judgemental or non-evaluative awareness. **What detracts from mindfulness is the evaluative mindset which seeks to judge the relevance or usefulness of different perspectives which are generated en route to a resolution.** Perspectives we generate are our attempt to address the disturbing question: 'What are you going to do about it?' We are checking out different perspectives to see what will work. This process is healthy. However, it requires letting go of each perspective as it arrives and move to a position of open mindedness over and over again. Mindfulness allows for a process of validating how we feel about options and perspectives in a protocol of letting go of options and perspectives. **The opposite to this approach is developing and deliberately maintaining an attachment to an option which then introduces the deception of desire and conditioning as the prime mover of the outcome.**

The natural tendency is to join the dots of our discrete, separate experiences and create a profile. The profile forms a pattern which comforts us because it looks meaningful and intelligible. However we then are tempted to use the profile predictively. It is used to predict a perceived outcome. Worst still like a self-fulfilling prophecy it is used to justify an intervention to make the perceived outcome happen. Creative action emanates spontaneously. Rationalized behaviour causes self-sabotaging, anxiety and depression. Profile building is natural and part of the process but profiles need to be constantly deconstructed, or let go of, for us to stay in a state of mindfulness and open mindedness

Open mindedness and mindfulness create an inner freedom or space that then allows for an evolving response. Inner freedom demands letting go of what we want now without denying what we want now. **Wanting is not bad.** This inner freedom is a necessary condition for allowing our sense of timing and safety, personal truth and real world constraints to be integrated with our wanting into the evolving outcome. The relevance or usefulness of these types of integrating realities cannot be consciously deducted or readily apprehended in thought. **These realities exist and we learn to be open to them when we suspend judgement about the relevance of a perspective or option for action in a crisis.**

Mindfulness practice addresses the issue of conditioning in relation to generating options. Mindfulness treats perspectives as mental states in time, body felt experiences and energetic movements (driven by the desire to seek pleasure and avoid pain) of our being rather than fixed datum of information or objective truths to be assessed.

If I am evaluating the *relevance or usefulness* of a state of mind, feeling, bodily sensation, thought pattern or perspective, I am not in a state of mindfulness of that feeling, sensation, thought pattern or perspective. I am not aware of it as an immediate lived experience at that moment of evaluation. At the moment of evaluating the usefulness of a perspective I am not present to my experience. In that sense, while I am evaluating I am not aware of my body felt sense.

Our body felt sense does not lie about how much at risk I am or how much opportunity exists for me. This is the type of information or experience I need to be exposed to and transparent to. **This information informs me actually.** Once I am aware of this information I am standing in the real world. **What is real is how I experience something personally.** I don't need to know the relevance of my experience to solve a problem. I need to know what I am experiencing. I need to know I feel scared in my body, tense and afraid. I need to know I feel in love, euphoric and anxiously wanting. **I don't need to have perfect emotions. I need to acknowledge my humanity in whatever state I experience it without any judgement about its validity, relevance or usefulness to answer the question at hand.**

For example, a worker feels bullied by a co-worker or manager. Observing, or being present to, the feeling of being bullied, is mindfulness. *In the moment that worker passively observes the feelings associated with thoughts of bullying, he or she is in a state of mindfulness.* The worker may become aware of the heaviness in their body, the sense of pessimism and powerless or anger at that moment. At this point the worker is in a state of mindfulness; mindful of his or her experience.

Similarly, the moment the worker is passively observing feelings and bodily sensations associated with perspectives to resolve the threat of bullying, he or she is in a state of mindfulness. However, they are not in a state of mindfulness if they are actively evaluating the relevance or usefulness of an option. For example, an evaluative

approach would say if it feels good and makes sense do it. A non-evaluative mindful approach would say I am aware I am considering an option and I am aware that while I am considering that option I feel a certain body felt sense.

This is discernment. This is wisdom. This is powerful assistance for the journey. This is simple. This is self-awareness. This is insight and it is what people who suffer psychosis appear to lack. Insight is not understanding the cause of my problems or illumination about my “higher self”. Insight is the ability to be present to, acknowledge and observe my experience as I am experiencing it. This is the basis of recovery and adjustment. It is the basis of self-development and growth. It forms part of the basis of transcending our conditioning from childhood. In the state of mindfulness I am in touch with my authentic self. The notion of and primacy on *illumination* about “who I really am deep down” is very deceptive. This type of knowing about relevance of who we are is a false reality. It is a constructed reality. We are mysteries to ourselves.

**Self-awareness has its own value.** It does not need to be consciously assessed or deemed to be relevant or useful to have value for the journey. Furthermore we don't need to know its relevance for it to be relevant. Knowing how I feel is enough.

Once we are freed from the constriction of needing to know “the answer” literally, we can allow ourselves to recognize the involuntary associations coming to our imagination. In this mode, metaphor becomes a powerful tool for discernment and self-awareness. **Metaphor and associations in our imagination**, which are connected to our body felt sense about an issue, are mirroring our otherwise less conscious sense of reality and personal truth. This type of listening to ourselves is very powerful and informative but once again as long as we suspend judgement about their relevance and usefulness for action.

For example, one might find oneself saying I get the sense I am sounding like mum or dad when I talk to my spouse in a particular way. Or when I get stressed about money I find I turn into dad or mum. I actually feel like I am mum or dad. Or I feel like I'm a teenager at school every time I mix with these people. I feel I have been punished and sent to my room every time I engage with my manager. These types of imaginings, metaphors and associations arise in our imagination involuntarily helping us be aware of what is taking over in us. Helping us to be aware of risks and opportunities. Helping

us understand what energy or modelling we are operating out of. These involuntary feelings, imaginings and metaphors also may be alerting us to how we may be regressing back to old ways and associations we would prefer to forget. Old dependencies and maladaptive behavioural patterns which we would prefer not to revisit. They may be telling us if we keep associating with certain people and activities we will regress back to old self-sabotaging ways. Along with these negative imaginings, metaphors and associations would follow a corresponding body felt sense.

Simply acknowledging these types of imaginings, metaphors and associations in mindfulness, can help to circuit break us from the maladaptive modelling and behavioural attachment in the here and now. So by staying with my awareness I create enough space for self-love and my sense of self to be present and to inform my actions. This dynamic helps me step back from the engagements and maladaptive modelling or behavioural attachments. So once again I am not making judgements about the relevance or usefulness of the awareness in order to be free.

It is very tempting to be seduced by an association or illumination in our minds. Yet mindfulness and for that matter creative action and the avoidance of self-sabotaging requires a constant letting go of illumination without denying it. Frankly, we need to let go of the Hollywood notions of the Sage and the Priestess Archetypes, and get real about what can be known with certainty especially when we are accessing this powerful part of our consciousness and come back to simplicity. Otherwise this powerful gift of awareness turns on us as we self-sabotage in a false knowing about relevance.

This question, 'What am I going to do about it?' primarily introduces psychological reactions of anxiety and depression. The question introduces the possibility of taking on a false knowing or false empowerment. The force of the need to answer the question tempts us to believe something to be relevant or useful when we really don't know for sure it is. **Depression and anxiety come from taking false positions on reality and deliberately investing in seeking positions as the key method for problem resolution.** In this sense, if we didn't have to deal with this question we would not get anxious and depressed.

**The question demands a response in a crisis.** Sometimes the question is totally overwhelming. Sometimes we collapse under the pressure of the question in the moment and come up with, and then act out, rash and premature solutions; lacking timing and appropriateness. Alternatively, endless consideration or over-analysis of the relevance of an option, to resolve one's situation, can also lead to feeling stuck. This can then lead one to impulsive actions just to deal with feeling stuck and powerless. Perception of the possibility of this destructive self-sabotaging behaviour causes anxiety and depression primarily, not the bullying on its own.

**We can resolve the crisis mindfully and openly or reactively and defensively.** We can resolve it creatively or destructively. The options are primarily instinctive. Our instinctive awareness that we could self-sabotage, at this point, causes us anxiety and depression. We are instinctively aware we could harm ourselves or others at this point. For example, the worker may default to a mode of being or modelling (in the fight, freeze or flight state) which they adopted from their mum or dad in childhood. They see dad hitting mum and internalize this modelling, **judging that *this is the way to deal with a crisis or opportunity***. **Yes, a child is dealing with questions too and a child adopts the models around them to deal with their questions.** So to a worker who has been bullied, and who watched his or her dad hit mum, may feel compelled to assault their manager or co-worker. The bullying has breached his or her defences and the worker may regress to the mental state of a five year old child who assumes dad must know what he is doing ***simply because he is dad***. However the worker is not five and he or she needs his or her job to survive. The awareness that he or she could self-sabotage by defaulting to his or her dad's modelling causes the worker instantaneous anxiety and depression. This evokes anxiety and depression primarily, not the bullying on its own.

**Mindfulness acts to circuit break the worker from the compulsiveness of the default mental state and learnt modelling by connecting the worker with his or her body felt sense of imminent danger.** Now you might think that is fine, 'you get that bit'. But what if I were to say to you, assessment of the relevance or usefulness of that body felt sense is undermining. I am suggesting we can't mix and match awareness and open mindedness with assessment and position taking. They are two

different worlds and ways of being. One brings peace and creativity and the other brings anxiety, depression and self-sabotaging in problematic crises.

The models of behaviour we adopt in a state of risk and threat may be learnt from parents and significant others from early childhood and beyond. We become attached to the models our parents and significant others have used to deal with their crises primarily. **We don't become attached to our parents and significant others as people but as symbols, as symbols of ways of dealing with the question. The critical issue is the attachment to the modelling, because the modelling addresses the question: 'What are you going to do about it?'**

Most people believe if we arrive at the correct answer to the question (via a process primarily of assessment), '*what are you go to do about it?*' we will find happiness and resolve the crisis. This is a false assumption in general terms for a problematic crisis. **The resolution to the crisis evolves out of spontaneous action emanating from adopting a method not an answer in general terms. It comes from adopting openness while mindful of one's (deconstructed or non-evaluated) experience of risks and opportunities.**

Our quest to address the question: 'What am I going to do about it?' evokes and involves our drive to seek pleasure and avoid pain. What gives one person comfort, or what is their individual comfort zone, is an issue for type and trait psychology and clinical pathology. Individual differences in type, trait and pathology all contribute to a person's sense of their comfort zone and their aversions.

Mindfulness can circuit break a person from attachment to a familiar, comfortable way of doing things. A timid, shy, conflict avoiding worker may need to make representation to HR and beyond to negotiate their needs if they are being bullied. They may need to go outside their comfort zone. They may need to go beyond what they want. They may need to draw on deeper instincts of survival and personal truth which they are not familiar with to get their needs met.

Mindfulness circuit breaks a person from their familiar comfort zone and creates a space for common sense to rise to the surface, so to speak, and inform actions. It does this without repressing our comfort zone drive, which is where we get the energy

to keep striving for solutions and happiness. In fact it works with that energy by treating ideas as energy not fixed points from which to operate.

### Mindfulness Technique: Bacash Meditation Therapy

[View on YouTube. Keywords: Bacash Meditation \(4 mins\)](#)

Key features of this technique include the use of mantra recitation and attention to breathing while allowing ourselves to regress into involuntary states of mind. Attending to a meaningful mantra and attending to the sensation of breathing brings us back to awareness of the here and now, while recitation promotes regression and drifting away. The combination of the two is highly therapeutic. We are combining diversionary techniques with allowing ourselves to be absent in a perfectly safe and balanced mode. The safety of the combination comes from not deliberately evaluating what we are becoming absorbed into when we find ourselves observing our experience, at stuck moments in the meditation. Instead of evaluating we simply let go of the experience and return to our mantra recitation and noticing our breaking. We return to the here and now and start the repetitive recitation all over again from scratch and see what comes next.

Therapeutically speaking unresolved issues are coming to the surface seeking resolution through involuntary expression. As a general rule all unresolved issues will keep pushing into consciousness till they are resolved. They rise to the surface symbolically. We don't need to know the relevance or usefulness of the symbols or associations but we do need to know how we feel as we experience them. We need to listen, allow and attend like a parent would with a child. We need to listen without judgement and with love, a sense of permission and forgiveness. In this context we can acknowledge our experience in its raw state. We experience fear or anger as fear or anger. Sounds simple but it is essential to adjustment.